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Introduction to the Blackfeet

Blackfeet Means Many Kinds of People

THE CENTRAL THEME of this book is diversity. In some ways American Indians are different from other segments of the United States population, yet it is an oversimplification to speak of "the Indian" and "Indian problems." There are Indian problems only in the sense that it is Indians who are involved with them in Indian communities. Then, too, all Indians are not alike. Not only do tribes differ one from the other, but there is often great variation within a single tribe. The Blackfeet are not like the Hopi, neither of these is like the Kwakiutl, and all differ from the Menomini: similarly it is impossible to describe the "typical" Blackfeet Indian. Many kinds of people and diverse ways of coping with reservation life are to be found among the Blackfeet, as I will try to show.

Albert Buffalo Heart, 1878–1964, was a respected elder and honorary chief of the Piegan tribe of the Blackfeet Indians, who lived in Browning, Montana, the economic and political hub of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. He was a tall, heavy-set, distinguished-looking man, who dressed in worn, well-laundered wool trousers and shirt, moccasins, a neckerchief, and a hat with a tall undented crown. Buffalo Heart was a poor man by the white man's standards, but to the more Indian members of the tribe he was rich in the things that counted. He had lived a long life, had learned and practiced Indian ways, and was helpful and generous to his many kinsmen and friends.

During North American Indian Days, the annual Indian encampment that is one of Browning's main summer tourist attractions, he would be one of a group of advisers who tried to insure that the ceremonies were properly Indian. If the Sun Dance ceremony was to be conducted, he would be given a principal role, as he knew some of the ritual necessary for its success. He donned his ceremonial regalia—a beaded suit of white deerskin, a Plains Indian headdress, and an air of dignity—to greet distinguished visitors and to officiate in the adoption cere-

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monies in which visiting dignitaries were given an Indian name and adopted, symbolically, into the Blackfeet tribe. If any family conducted a memorial service for a deceased relative, or staged a give-away to honor visitors, he was called upon to be the crier. As crier he announced the import of the ceremony, led in chanting the proper song, or cried out the occasion for the give-away and called out the names of those to be honored with a gift.

In years past he had been employed by the Great Northern Railway as an official greeter of tourists arriving by train at Glacier Park, and as an entertainer at the inns within the Park where he and his friends staged Indian dances for the tourists.

Buffalo Heart, with others of his peers, had a place on the Honorary Tribal Council, and was given a small per diem for attendance at tribal council meetings. He was often chosen to accompany council members on trips to Washington, D.C. for the purpose of lobbying for or against proposed legislation which would affect Indians. In his regalia he furnished a bit of Indian color, as well as advice, to the proceedings.

Buffalo Heart and his fellow members of the Honorary Council felt that they represented the voice of the full-blood portion of the tribe and took every occasion to make long speeches in Blackfeet, urging harmony and trust, and asking for more attention to the needs of the people. But people paid little attention to the speeches; instead they talked, moved about, and impatiently filled in time until the Honorary Councilmen had had their say. On several occasions councilmen told the interpreter: "Tell him to make it short." The people in general felt some pride in their old-timers, but mixed this with a feeling of impatience and bare tolerance when the chiefs seemed to be taking themselves too seriously.

Buffalo Heart, and the others like him, usually lived among clusters of full-bloods in the more run-down areas of town, in small outlying communities, or, in a few cases, in more remote areas of the reservation. Buffalo Heart lived in a small two-room shack on Moccasin Flat, an area of shacks and cabins without sewer or water service, on the edge of Browning. The houses immediately surrounding his were occupied by some of his kin—a married son and his family, two married daughters and their families, and the family group of his brother.

The old man's home was the center for Indian gatherings. Here he and his friends conducted the religious rituals, bundle openings, and other ceremonies they wished to celebrate. Those who were singers would gather here occasionally for a song service—a meeting where they would drum and sing old and new songs. Buffalo Heart served as a tie to the old days, a source of information on lore and ritual, and an available medicine man for those who wished an Indian cure. The younger members of his family might participate in these functions, but usually just watched with a respectful air. As one family member said: "You join in even if you don't believe—it's part of the old Indian ways."

Buffalo Heart, however, was more than a man of the past. He was a medicine man and conducted curing ceremonies, yet he and those whom he had cured more often availed themselves of the services of the local doctors and hospital. Buffalo Heart was known as a Catholic and attended church occasionally, yet he was also considered to be a repository for, and a leader in, the present-day

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The drummers and part of the crowd at the North American Indian Days Celebration.

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practice of the Indian religion. How did he combine or compartmentalize these two beliefs? Did he perceive the Catholic ritual as a modern means for expressing Indian beliefs? The priest, it was said, was perplexed by these questions.

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There were varying perceptions of Buffalo Heart among the tribal members. Some would speak respectfully of him: "He is one of the chiefs, one of *our* people and looks after us." Others chose to praise another and saw Buffalo Heart as an old codger who had no right to the name of chief. The other chiefs might also dismiss his tales of the past and his religious knowledge as "lies." "He doesn't know anything. The truth is. . . ." So Buffalo Heart was a prophet and honored person to some, the butt of jokes to others, and, it must be noted, the judgments varied according to the situation and the person to whom the remarks were addressed. Nonetheless, this man was given a role to play, a role with limits im-

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the reservation who comes to town to shop, get his mail, and conduct business with the council or the agency. He and his sons farm on a small scale but he feels that they are economically independent. Roy takes an active interest in the tribal affairs, and while he has some knowledge of the past Indian culture—much of which he had learned from others in the past few years—Roy is more concerned with the recent past of the Indian, the relationships among the tribe, the agency and the tribal council. He told about the successes and failures of the various government programs and assessed the strengths and shortcomings of the various agents and superintendents who had represented the Bureau of Indian Affairs over the past forty years. He felt that the best days were those before 1934, before the Wheeler-Howard Act gave many political and economic powers to the tribe. His "Golden Age" falls in the early 1920s when a "good" agent acted as a "father" to the people and set the full-bloods to farming. "Everybody had a small ranch or farm, lived on it, and were doing all right." Since then, the council has taken over, the farm program died out, liquor has been admitted to the reservation and "ruined the young people." The full-blood has "lost out; the white man has taken over the best lands, and the whole tribe has gone down hill."

Roy is an occasional observer at the Indian Days festivities but takes no active part. He thinks that these affairs and the money spent for them are time consuming and wasteful. The people would be better off if the time and money were spent for getting themselves established on farms or ranches. Farming requires steady work with little time left over for hanging around town, dancing, drinking, and visiting.

Like Buffalo Heart and Arrowhead, Roy is a full-blood Blackfeet, and I met others who share his attitudes. Some of these are less successful economically than Roy, and are in town less frequently. Bob Sorrel Horse is one of these. He lacks the drive and, as he lamented, the capital with which to realize the "dream" he has of building a small ranch. "I think a lot when I'm alone. I have this dream to get some money and fix this place up right—a nice house and a good place. First I'd get electricity in to pump the water. I had planned to remodel the house—my father built this a long time ago—to have a place I'm not ashamed of." The dream has not been realized, but I was impressed by the order he maintains around his log cabin and by the effort that has gone into the utilization of the little Bob has.

Because these men are seldom in town, I did not get to know them well enough to assess their cultural backgrounds, but did gather that they had had the opportunity, in their families and during their childhood and youth, to learn aspects of the traditional Blackfeet culture. They speak Blackfeet as well as good English. The Indian accent, which I can only describe as a rather musical variation in pitch and a fairly explosive phrasing, neither of which conforms to general English speech patterns, but which are more familiar to the speaker of Blackfeet, is slightly noticeable. These men appear to have lived within this more traditional cultural context without having absorbed much of it, and at the same time have striven toward goals of economic success more related to those of western culture. They feel no need to reaffirm, exaggerate, or separate an Indian part of their lives as opposed to a white part. They are Indians. They can be antiwhite in matters

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Blackfeet and his wife is 1/16. He was dressed in the familiar blue denim pants, cowboy shirt, boots, and hat.

The ranch Robert operates belonged to his father who had established the home and herd in 1940. Robert had been given a few cows while he was in school as payment for his work on the ranch. As his father grew older, more and more of the work had been turned over to Robert and his brother, until they have assumed complete charge. His father is dead; his mother lives with him.

What is Indian about Robert? He said he does not speak the language, although his father could. He knows nothing about the old Indian religion, lore, or medicine. He and his parents before him were raised as Catholics and attended church regularly. His great-grandmother was a full-blood Blackfeet, but his father and grandfather had both married white women, so he felt that his home background and training had been no different than it would have been if he had had no Indian ancestors, and had been born and raised on a similar ranch across the reservation line. Because they have lived on the reservation, he and members of his family have picked up, by observation and hearsay, a superficial knowledge of Indians and Indian ways, but he evinced little interest in these things. A few of his relatives have taken an interest in the more formal aspects of pan-Indianism; they participate, for example, in the major Indian Pow Wows such as the annual Indian Encampment at Sheridan, Wyoming. Their participation is limited to marching or riding in the parade, entering a daughter in the Miss American Indian contest, or acting as a judge for this and other contests. They neither camp in the tepee circle nor participate in the dances.

Robert has gone to school with people who are more Indian than he, so he knows many kinds of people. His social activities, however, have been limited to his family and their close friends—people much like himself. He casts Indian problems into one or the other of two contexts. His immediate response to a question about Indians is to talk about reservation problems, of land, leasing, cattle, employment, and of the conflicts between "Indians" (the reservation population) and the "whites" (government officials, white farmers who bought or leased Indian land, and the local merchants). Within this context he is aligned with the tribe and the Indians. When the discussion turns to matters of Indian culture, his focus changes. At times he felt that people should let the Indians live the way they want to. At other times he commented that these beliefs and practices are doomed to extinction and should be helped on their way. The impressive thing was that this does not concern him. He suggested that I call upon some of the "Indians." "They can tell you about this." Within this context, Robert did not see himself as an Indian. What is an Indian? When and under what circumstances do people of mixed-blood see themselves as Indians and when not? Does the full-blood Indian think of people like Robert as Indian or white? Are they considered to be Indian or non-Indian by the white people who live around them?

Robert's recreational activities center around the ranch life. He rarely attends the local Indian Days festivities. He is, however, among the audience at all local rodeos, fairs, and school meetings, and takes part in a few community service projects—those concerned with community development, schools, youth programs, cattle and range management programs.

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541 latter ceremony, the War Mothers and families of veterans who had died in action.
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The Air Force ceremony struck several of us as a test of the time sense of two cultures. Two Air Force generals were to be honored by being given a Blackfeet name and honorary membership in the Blackfeet tribe. The ritual called for a speech by an elderly chief at the conclusion of which he would pronounce the name he was giving the general, and place a war bonnet on the head of the newly adopted tribesman. A second chief would then make the bestowal to the other general. Air Force plans called for a jet plane fly-over as the war bonnet was put on the head of the senior officer. Four members of the Honorary Council, the master of ceremonies and an interpreter, dressed in Indian regalia, stood in an informal group at one side awaiting the beginning of the ceremonies, while to the other an Air Force contingent consisting of the two generals, fifteen full colonels and a captain, and a color guard of a sergeant and five enlisted men, were drawn up in formation. There was much synchronizing of watches on the military side, a relaxed unconcerned waiting on the part of the Blackfeet. The jets were evidently airborne somewhere over the horizon; if there was radio communication between the planes and the group on the ground, I did not see it.

The ceremony began. Air Force participation could be and was done according to a planned time sequence, but no one could predict how long one of the chiefs might choose to speak. Yet even as I was figuring the odds on outcome, the old chief concluded his speech and pronounced the name, the interpreter translated it, the war bonnet went up and the jets came over the horizon, over the group on the ground and out of sight in the direction of Great Falls. Someone, I will never know who, had good medicine.

The War Memorial dedication was a concern of local people and brought together an audience of families of veterans and tribal dignitaries. It marked the success of a drive begun many years earlier by the War Mothers (mothers of war veterans) to raise money for such a memorial, so commemorated too their persistence and hard work. A procession of tribal leaders, some in Indian regalia, the American Legion Color Guard, the Boy Scouts, and the War Mothers was followed by speeches from the Gold Star Mothers and the unveiling of the pylon shaped monument upon which was mounted a bronze plaque inscribed with the names of tribal members who had been killed in action in U.S. wars. Later in the day the War Mothers staged a give-away ceremony in memory of these war dead.

Indian-Oriented Social Occasions

571 The social occasions where most of the participants and spectators are people of Indian orientation include several public, semiprivate and private gatherings. Some are formal occasions while others are informal in their organization.
[520] Formal public occasions include the North American Indian Days celebrations at
[796] Browning, a Sun Dance held in conjunction with one of these, and periodically
[535] scheduled Indian dances. Horse races and stick game gatherings in the outlying
[526] communities are frequent forms of public entertainment organized on a less
[574] formal basis. The private and semiprivate gatherings are those to which attendance
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is invited, tacitly or directly, and some of the formal occasions for such congregation are medicine bundle openings, curing ceremonies, song services, and private parties. House to house visiting, gatherings of families and friends, the visiting grouping at the formal public activities, in office buildings and stores, and street corner visiting are kinds of informal private interaction.

The Indian Days celebrations are annual affairs sponsored by the reservation community. The tribal council makes an appropriation to underwrite the celebration, and local businessmen make cash contributions or put up prizes for competitive events. The four day celebration, held in late June or early July, is a reenactment of the traditional Blackfeet summer encampment and advertised widely as a tourist attraction. Families who own tepees are encouraged to pitch them on the encampment grounds and to camp there with their families. Indians from other reservations are invited, resulting in a camp circle of fifty or more tepees formed by local people, visitors from the Canadian Reserves—Blood, North Piegan, Blackfoot and Cree—and from surrounding United States Indian communities—Warm Springs, Yakima, Umatilla, Crow, Gros Ventre, Cheyenne, Assiniboine, Flathead, and Cree, among others. Sleeping and cooking tents are erected behind the tepee circle and upwards of seven hundred people live on the grounds during the encampment. Each family camping on the grounds is paid a cash allowance toward their maintenance and shares in a daily meat or food ration.

The formal program opens with a parade through the main street of Browning and out to the encampment grounds near the Museum of the Plains Indian, a half mile west of town. A regular program of Indian dancing to the accompaniment of singing and drumming by local and visiting singing groups is scheduled each afternoon, and continues long into the evening if the weather permits.

The dancing sessions are interrupted frequently by both planned and unplanned intermission activities—special dance contests, games, and "give-aways." Some of the last mentioned gift giving ceremonies are sponsored by the Indian Days Committee to honor and give gifts to invited guests from other tribes. Others are put on by individuals and families who wish—and are expected—to give gifts in remembrance of a deceased relative, to give a new and significant Indian name to a child in a public naming ceremony, or to honor some other person by a display of generosity in his name. The person to be honored and his family form a procession and pass four times around the dance arena as the singers drum and sing a favored song. A similar procession is formed for the memorial give-away, and a close relative carries a photograph of the deceased relative. Increasingly distant relatives join the procession with each turn. Quantities of gifts are brought in and at the conclusion of the processional, a crier acting for the family calls out the names of those to be given gifts. Occasionally a tepee with furnishings is given, sometimes horses, more usually blankets, cigarettes, and cash make up the gifts.

Another almost regularly occurring part of the program is a ceremony in which distinguished visitors are adopted into the Blackfeet Tribe. These people are given an Indian name and a war bonnet, or other tokens of their new status, by an honored elder. In 1960, Indian Days coincided with the U.S. Governors

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Conference at Many Glaciers Lodge in Glacier National Park. Six of the governors who visited the encampment were honored by adoption and given names, and the Governor of Virginia was selected to respond for the others. He began by remarking that the people of Virginia felt a special and warm regard for the Indians. "If it had not been for the help of the Indians the Jamestown settlement would not have survived that first winter." A Blackfeet standing beside me gave me a dig in the ribs with his elbow and said, "that's the day we lost the war."

The encampment also provides the opportunity for other forms of social expression. Medicine bundles are opened with attendant prayers, dances, and face-painting. Men may be "captured" to become members of the Dog society, an honor that must be paid for in goods or cash. People visit from tepee to tepee, drink coffee, eat, and talk. Sometimes one or more of the elderly Indian-oriented leaders will provide a lunch of boiled beef, bread, salad, doughnuts, cookies, cake, and coffee to all who wish to come.

By midafternoon a stick game or two gets under way near one of the concesion booths behind the tent area and usually continues until dawn. Sometimes known as the "hand game," this is a popular and widely known Indian gambling game. All that is required is space, two poles, planks, or timbers placed about three feet apart parallel to each other, two "bones," or short wooden cylinders about ½ inch in diameter and two inches long, one banded and the other plain, and some plain sticks about ten to twelve inches long, usually ten to a side to use as markers. Two teams line up facing each other behind each pole. One person starts the game by intently shuffling, showing, and after many flourishes hiding the bones, one in each hand. His team chants and drums with sticks on the pole in front of them to give him support and to confuse the opposition during the hiding. Finally he extends his hands so that one of the players on the other side can choose by one of several signs which hand holds the unmarked bone. If the "guesser" fails to choose correctly, his side forfeits one of their marker sticks and the "hider" tries again; if he guesses correctly, the bones and roles change sides. The game is over when one side wins all of the marker sticks. Bets between individuals, both participants and onlookers, are placed before the game begins and other bets are made frequently on the results of individual guesses. There are many variations in the procedure that I have not mastered. A bettor gets a lot of action for his money whether he fully understands what is happening or not. The drumming, chanting, joking, as well as the strain of waiting for the outcome of a game in which large sums of money are at stake, contribute to an exciting time.

People spend the rest of the time during the encampment doing the necessary chores of camp living and enjoying the pastimes appropriate to sex and age—the children play games, older people work on costumes, play blackjack, visit, loaf, or go into town.

In spite of this being a community enterprise with fairly large crowds that are attracted to it, the people in relatively continuous attendance are the Indian-oriented. The people who camp on the grounds and participate in the festivities include and appear to be like the men I interviewed and classed as Indian-oriented. In retrospect, I would sort the onlookers into four categories. (a) Indian-oriented spectators from many parts of the reservation who spend much time on

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the grounds and can be seen in attendance day after day, (b) a number of people recognized as of white-orientation who make a brief appearance, spend an hour or two watching the proceedings and then leave, (c) a few white-oriented people, who because of special community roles and interests have reason to be in attendance more frequently, and (d) a changing tourist attendance of twenty-five to one hundred persons who spend varying amounts of time enjoying the spectacle. The patterns of attendance and participation appear to be changing. During the past ten years, many older people have died and fewer expert ritualists are left, but younger people are getting involved in the dancing. In 1959, I noted that few teenagers were dancing; the dancers tended to be either over thirty or under twelve years old. In 1970, these youngsters had become teenagers and were still turning out. More children were dancing. All age ranges seemed to be represented. In addition, several children from white-oriented families were seen to be buying costumes and learning to dance.[12]

The most recent Sun Dances were performed in 1959 and 1964 and the ceremony I observed (1959) was held in conjunction with that year's Indian Days. The religious ceremonies were held on the encampment grounds preceding the secular festivities. A "Medicine Lodge" was constructed with appropriate ritual by setting up a circle of ten poles around a center post: rafters were strung between these poles and from each pole to the center post and lashed into place with strips of hide. An opening was left to the east, and the wall and "roof" at the west end were covered with leafy cottonwood branches to make a sun and wind shelter for the ritualists who worked inside. The participants were largely people of Indian-orientation as were most of the spectators. Modern Indian-orientation does not require full knowledge and belief in the old religion. While the key roles were filled by older men who knew the ritual, other people were chosen more because they came close to the model of "good Indian people" than for their knowledge of the ritual. Some others were selected because they were kin of the more traditional participants or were among the social and political leaders from both segments of the community. One woman told me that she had been "captured" and had paid for the privilege of "owning" the knife and the right to cut the hide into strips for the lashings on the Medicine Lodge. This was traditionally a male prerogative, and in this case a male relative acted for her. In 1964 a young man conducted the ritual, thus assuming a role usually reserved for an older man. He had been trained from childhood by his grandfather and other elders, so perhaps was better qualified in this respect than most living elders, but his action appeared to have made some of the older people uneasy. Such changes aside, the ceremonies are solemn, the key participants are involved in rituals that have deep meaning for them; the other participants pay respect to the beliefs expressed, and the families and friends of the people involved watch the proceedings with mixed emotions of interest, understanding, tolerance and respect.

Social dancing at the Indian Days Celebration functions as both entertainment for the tourists and recreation for the participants. The dancers do not

[12] Participation by these young people might introduce some confusion into my orientation schemes, but for reasons I will discuss in the final chapter, I think that their participation does not signal a turn toward Indian-orientation on their part.

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enjoyable occasion," a social gathering of people who shared interests in aspects of Indian culture.

The social grouping of Indian-oriented people gains further support from observations of informal clustering. At the Indian Days encampment, and at the social dances in particular, it was relatively easy to watch for the Indian-oriented people and to notice with whom they spent their time in informal groupings—visiting, chatting, watching, and relaxing. Most of such visiting was with people of similar orientation with only occasional mixing among men of differing orienta-

The forming of the tepee circle for North American Indian Days.

tions. Other observations and reports further support these conclusions. Visits to homes, reported visiting among families and friends, and observations of grouping on other occasions reinforced the pattern.

In 1962 I wrote:

> Perhaps the most visible visiting pattern for the Indian-oriented people is the very regular daily congregation in sidewalk groups. From late spring to mid-autumn as many as eighty people can be seen standing or sitting at fairly predictable locations around the town. The location is determined by people's inclinations and by the requirements of sun, shade, or shelter from the wind. People pass many hours a day, visiting and watching the passers-by. White-oriented men are on the street but stop for only short periods of time and then move on, but the Indian-oriented man and his friends make this a major avocation.
>
> If the weather is bad the visitors form smaller groups and move into the nearby

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sion of the characteristics that make for the achievement of high status will describe best the ideals of the society against which the lower rankings are also measured.

INDIAN-ORIENTED HIGH STATUS The joint requirements of maintaining Indian identity and achieving this within the political and economic framework of white culture have opened two channels to prestige and leadership within the Indian-oriented group. The ideal leader in this situation would be a man wise in the ways of both traditional Blackfeet and modern American cultures. He would be an authority on how best to be an Indian, yet well educated, skilled, and able to meet the white man on common ground. He would be experienced sufficiently to gain acceptance and influence in white society and to act as an able interpreter of each group to the other. The history of Blackfeet and American relations is too short to have produced such an ideal in one man. Instead, as more and more tribal members become white-oriented, some men gain high status by their greater knowledge of Blackfeet culture as it is known today. These leaders form a least acculturated high status stratum that for the sake of simplicity, will be called the *chiefs*. Others, better educated and more experienced with white culture, find high status by playing the roles of intercultural interpreters and mediators. They are accomplished spokesmen for the Indian-oriented point of view, and as a more acculturated high status class are labeled *interpreters*. There are more than generational differences between these two status types.

Chiefs are usually older men who know and support the currently known traditions and beliefs. They vary in their knowledge, belief and dedication, but all, together, form a repository of what is remembered of the old ways. One of these men recognized that much of the old culture had been lost, "things beyond the memory of even the old timers," but he and others of his status are "trying to show the young people the things from the past," with special emphasis on keeping the language alive. Their qualities and characteristics are those given in the description of Albert Buffalo Heart, so will be only summarily reviewed here.

Through their age, knowledge, and practice of Blackfeet ideals each of these men has gained the respect of a numerous following of kinsmen, friends and people from a particular region who recognize him as their chief, or respected elder. So these men are given respect and loyalty but little political power. It appears that the old leadership structure persists among the Indian-oriented group. People tend to shift their loyalties according to kinship, friendship, and self-interest. The leadership that develops carries responsibilities and influence, but rarely true authority. The chiefs are recognized as links to the past, authorities on tradition, and symbols of the Indian, but as the roles given them will show, these things are peripheral to the present political and economic sphere.

Chiefs perform a variety of public duties that center around their position as authorities on tradition. They serve on the Indian Days committee; they help in planning the program and in the regulation of the camp; they don ceremonial regalia to take part in the dancing and exhibitions that make up the program. If a Sun Dance is held, it should be sponsored by people of this class and the principal roles will be filled by chiefs and their families. They are called upon to greet distinguished visitors and to officiate in adoption ceremonies and give-aways.

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Bloods and Piegan visitors at the Blood Ration House in 1881. In the foreground is the Negro interpreter, Dave Mills. Next to him is Running Rabbit. Center row, from left to right: Bull Backfat; Old Eagle Ribs; the agent; Four Horns, a South Piegan; and Jack Miller, or Three Bulls, a half-breed from the South Piegans. Back row: Two agency employees; Eagle Head; an unknown man; another employee; Last Gun—nephew of Running Wolf and sergeant of the South Piegan head chief, White Calf; then Hind Bull; and finally, Blackfoot Old Woman, or Ermine Horse, who was then a minor chief. (Glenbow Archives)

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Old agency at the north end of the reserve, along the Belly River. This is where the People used to come to get their rations, their treaty money, and their bad news about the latest in government plans and restrictions to their life. Tipi camps, dances, and horse races were a regular part of treaty payment days. Few of the men came to the old agency during ration days—the women brought their family's ration cards and loaded the supplies on travois or in wagons. (Glenbow Archives)

[p. 304]

42: Kehoe A,G-4,5 (1953, 1956) 1960
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in which the boulder configurations of unknown function are now found.

APPENDIX

A MODERN BLACKFOOT CAMP

On the morning of August 8, 1956, the Blackfoot began erecting lodges for their annual North American Indian Days Celebration (August 8–13, 1956) immediately to the rear of the Museum of the Plains Indian, in Browning, Mont. (see pl. 55, *a*). This celebration has replaced the Fourth of July gathering of previous years, and now coincides with the season of the annual Sun Dance assemblage of the historic tribes, in which the various bands of the tribe camped in one village in the form of a circle of lodges.

The summer season, usually beginning in June and ending in September, was the only time of the year when the entire tribe was encamped in a single village, using the camp circle. During the other seasons the several bands occupied different camps and used other arrangements of lodges (Ewers, 1955, p. 128). Similarly, the contemporary Blackfoot come together only once or twice in one village, during the summer season, and here use the camp circle. The remainder of the year finds them living in their various rural communities on the Reservation.

August 8 and 9, the first 2 days of the encampment, provided opportunities to secure detailed information and photographs of the erection of the lodges (pl. 54, *b*). By August 10 all the lodges were standing: 39 canvas tipis of the 4-pole type, 69 wall tents, and 2 umbrella tents. On this day, with the aid of Lloyd Torgerson of Ethridge, Mont., detailed aerial photographs, both oblique and horizontal, were obtained of the camp (pls. 55, *a*; 56, *b*). In the course of the same flight, a tipi-ring site, 24GL350, the rings of which formed a camp circle partially destroyed by road building, was photographed for comparison with the modern camp, which was subsequently mapped (figs. 36, 37; pl. 56, *a*). (During the previous autumn the 63 tipi rings at this site had been whitewashed for this purpose by an Indian crew under the writer's supervision—see pl. 55, *b*.)

From August 8 through August 13 visits were made to the various lodges of the encampment. Upon entering Lodge 26, owned by Mrs. Mae Williamson, it was discovered that rocks were being used to hold down the canvas liner of the lodge (pl. 57). These liners or back walls "serve to keep out the wind and water that may find its way down the poles from their tops. They protect the people from draughts, as air can enter under the edge of the tipi, pass upward between the cover and the back wall and out over their heads, affording ventilation

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 466]

A, [See Category 116. pp. 474-G to 474-I--Analyst]

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

discoveries which bore upon my own culture, and upon my personal self.

My original journal was very detailed and very long, but not all portions of this volume appeared therein. Some of the Chief's stories were on tape and had to be transcribed in their entirety and inserted in a manner duplicating the time and the place of their original telling. Also, my subsequent visits with the Chief--and I have been spending more and more time among the Piegans--have produced additional information which has been added in the form of footnotes. Otherwise, nothing has been changed--and absolutely nothing has been contrived: these are the words and the actions; these are the feelings and the thoughts; these are the people.

Most important, of course, are the people, and foremost among the people is the Chief. At this writing, the Old Fellow is well--and as dynamic as ever. His birthday was on May 10, but I gave him his birthday party on Sunday, May 8, in conjunction with a meeting of the Crazy Dog Society. (I have been elected a member of the Crazy Dogs.) No record of the precise date of the Chief's birth has been found, but since everything else he has ever told me has eventually checked out 100%, I accede to the Chief's belief that he was born on May 10, 1857, and consequently has just celebrated his 109th anniversary--assuredly he is well past the century mark.

Some time ago, the Chief told me that both his birth and his baptism had been recorded by a Roman Catholic priest whom he knew only by his Indian name, "Marten Cap," and it was in pursuit of my belief that "Marten Cap" was in reality a Jesuit missionary named Fr. Imoda that I came closest to establishing (verifying) the Chief's true age. In the records of old St. Peter's Mission, dated Dec. 31, 1875, entered in the hand of Fr. Imoda himself, I came upon the following: "*Ego C. Imoda S.J. prope flumen Natokiokas bapt. seq.* [I, C. Imoda, of the Society of Jesus, near Two Medicine River, baptised the following]." Listed then, in both English and Latin, were the baptismal names of seven of the children of Onistáipokah, the Chief's father. The Chief's Christian name ("James *Jacobum*") was among those listed, but since the Chief was by this time a well grown youth, and since Fr. Imoda was able to give only an approximation of his age at the time of baptism, the mystery lingers.

This journal, *Piegan*, was written less than four years ago, but those four years have seen many changes, both great and small, here on the Reservation. In Browning in "Moccasin Flat," there is scarcely a dwelling that does not now have inside water, electricity and a television set (but precious few of them have an inside toilet).

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lodge, making moccasins and clothing, picking berries, gathering wood, hauling water, preparing food, and taking care of the children, and so far as a Blackfoot woman was concerned, the more wives the merrier. A woman's husband traditionally had first claim on her younger sisters as his additional wives, and if a woman had no younger sisters she frequently shopped around and located her husband's second wife for him. There was less work for her to do this way, and she always had somebody to talk to.

For about an hour this afternoon I just sat and watched the flies flirt with the flypaper. In case the world would like to know, about twice as many flies light on the concave side of the paper as light on the convex side, and about two out of every five flies that light manage to get free again. Maybe I should compile a compendium of my observations. After all, Mr. P. gained immortal fame by revealing that a hungry dog will salivate when it thinks it is going to get fed --a fact which could have been gleaned from any farm boy.

At four o'clock, Jim came in with an immense load of wood, and his return left me free to go to town to check the mail. When I got back, at about six, Jim said that he and Dad had already "lunched around," so I opened a can of vegetable soup and made a jam and peanut butter sandwich. I brought the Chief several large cans of pineapple juice and a couple of pounds of white seedless grapes. I think he needs more of this kind of food. He ate some of the grapes and went immediately to bed. While I was taking off his moccasins, it occurred to me that he has been wearing the same sox for more than a week--and God knows his feet have not touched water--but the wool sox smell as fresh as the day I first put them on his feet. I hate to imagine what my sox would be like after a week of constant wear. I have never yet encountered an Indian with an unpleasant body odor, and I credit this in part to the fact that Indians are total strangers to nervous perspiration--they *never* become flustered, no matter what the situation. Well, hardly ever.

After the Chief retired, I imitated Jimmy's effort of several days ago and baked two pies--just to see whether I could do it. One was cherry and the other blueberry. We ate the cherry one as soon as it was finished, and it was not too bad for a first effort. During our postprandial discussion, Jimmy let slip the fate of the leather jacket and the tooled pistol holster that I gave him during my last visit. The Blackfoots have something called a "give-away dance," during which they vie with one another in seeing who can give away the most (just take a typical *White Christmas*, turn the whole thing around backward, and you come up with the general idea). I never

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431 did discover where all the stuff ends up, but undoubtedly, as do so
535 many Blackfoot social functions, the dance centers around some
527 sort of charity drive. Generosity, especially among the families of chiefs, was a primary virtue among the old-time Blackfoots, and from what I gathered, Jim came away from this dance in his moccasins and jockey shorts.

122 *9:45:* Jimmy has gone to bed. He must be exhausted, poor chap. And I am alone again and pretty introspective and analytical and am playing a tape of Cisco Houston singing folk songs.

No booze. I gave the last shot to the Chief this afternoon.

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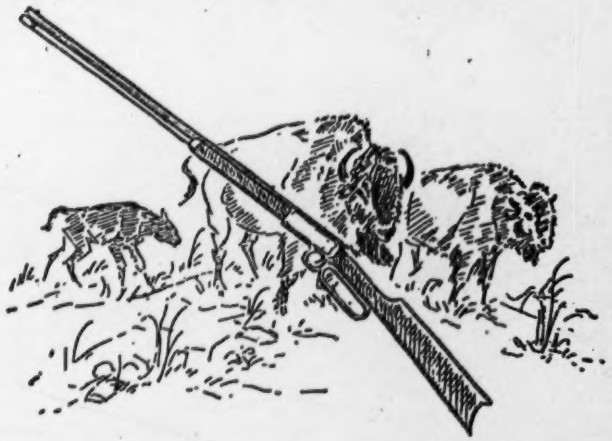

Wednesday, September 12

122 Last night I washed up and sacked out at 11:00. Three more puppies have appeared, and also a very small, very tough yellow kitten. The pups whined all night, waking me several times, and each time I waked I could hear the Chief chanting (praying). He must have prayed nearly the night long.

Jim was first up again. I was second. The Chief slept till eight. I talked Jim into having oatmeal instead of pancakes for breakfast, and I am sure that the Chief feels better because he ate a large bowl of oats and drank a glass of pineapple juice.

It was very cold out this morning, and when I went down for water I found that three horses had broken through the ice on the spring and were standing knee-deep therein. One was a beautiful

57: United States W-4 (no date) 1974 NT6 Blackfoot NF6
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BLACKFEET RESERVATION

TRIBAL ECONOMY
Average annual tribal income is $500,000. Ninety percent of this income is derived from minerals and 10 percent from miscellaneous sources. There are several industrial enterprises on the reservation, including a pencil manufacturer and a lumber cut-stock plant, providing employment for tribal members and income to the tribe.

CLIMATE
Rainfall averages about 14 inches per year. The temperature ranges from a high of 85° to a low of −20°.

TRANSPORTATION
U.S. Highway 89 runs southeast-northwest, and U.S. Highway 2 runs east-west through the reservation. Train, bus, and truck services are available on the reservation at Browning, while commercial air service is available at Great Falls, 125 miles away.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES
A large community building is available at Browning for various tribal activities. A modern library with 3,000 volumes was recently completed. The water system at Browning is municipally owned. Electricity is furnished by Glacier Cooperative and natural gas by Montana Power Company. The U.S. Public Health Service hospital at Browning provides medical care for tribal members.

RECREATION
Browning, gateway to Glacier National Park, is the principal reservation shopping center. This is also the site of the Museum of the Plains Indians, a nationally known repository of Indian artifacts. North American Indian Days are celebrated annually with dances, ceremonies, and a rodeo. In addition to Glacier National Park, reservation recreation areas include Lower St. Mary's Lake, Duck Lake, and other such areas.

Vital Statistics

Population:	
Indians residing on or adjacent to reservation:	6,216
Labor Force:	
Total:	1,353
Unemployed:	495
Unemployment rate:	37%